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Parliamentarians for East Timor
244A Upper Street, London N1 1RU

Memo to all members of PET

Overleaf is a letter from Lord Avebury to the Portuguese members of PET. It mentions initiatives that PET members in other countries might also take. This Memo sets these points out, plus some other ideas for action:

1. PET members could write to the UN Secretary-General, individually or together with others in their own Parliament, asking why he has not replied to Bishop Belo's letter of 6 February 1989 calling for a referendum. He should also be asked how he intends to consult the people of East Timor, in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution of November 1982.

Kindly indicate whether you or another PET member from your country could join a PET delegation to New York to meet the Secretary-General. This would give East Timor a higher profile internationally. If there is support for this proposal, the delegation might go early next year.

2. On 28 October, Jakarta and Canberra announced that agreement had been reached between the two governments for joint exploitation of off-shore oil and natural gas resources located in the stretch of sea between East Timor and Australia known as the Timor Gap. [Before the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, negotiations were under way between Portugal and Australia on drawing the sea boundary in this region. No boundary was drawn, hence the term 'Timor Gap' is used.] The Timor Gap agreement announced in October will be signed by the two governments in December this year, and joint exploitation of the mineral resources is scheduled to commence in 1990. The region is estimated to contain up to a thousand million barrels of oil.

The agreement is a flagrant violation of international law and disregards UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions which reaffirm the inalienable right of the people of East Timor to self-determination. Under international law the people of East Timor alone have the right to determine how this resource shall be exploited.

You might write to the Portuguese Embassy in your country seeking clarification on Portugal's plan of action. You might also make known your objections to the agreement to the Australian Embassy. As soon as we know Portugal's intentions and have heard from our Australian members on how they are dealing with the issue, we shall organise a campaign against the agreement. Meanwhile, kindly consider the point in the penultimate paragraph of the letter overleaf regarding the involvement of other oil companies in this region.

3. Our Portuguese members have been asked to consider arranging visits by their MPs to various capitals, to meet government and party representatives, to lobby in favour of East Timor and of Portugal's diplomatic initiatives. Hopefully, PET members will be willing to host the MPs and arrange their programme. Could you kindly consider this proposal and let us know what you think?

4. Please let us know whether you can take action along these lines or have other ideas for action in your own country or internationally.

5. PET membership now includes nine countries: Australia (48 members), Canada (10), West Germany (5), Japan (74), Holland (3), Portugal (6), Sweden (4), UK (8), US (1) and MEPs (12) . We need to recruit MPs from Asia, the Pacific, ASEAN, Africa and Latin America. If you know MPs in these regions who might want to join, please pass on their names.

London, 28 November 1989.

Founder Members
Satsuki Eda MHR (Japan), Tony Lamb MHR (Australia), Lord Avebury (UK)
Secretary: Carmel Budiardjo